

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. What I have always said is if they're opposed on the grounds of NAFTA next year, I'd be happy to say in any district in America or to any district in America that I think NAFTA is in the public interest, it's in the national interest, and it should not be

the basis on which any Member of Congress, without regard to party, is voted out. Thanks.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 8:25 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's Radio Address *November 13, 1993*

Good morning. This week, Americans celebrated Veterans Day, the day we set aside to thank those who served, kept us secure, and helped preserve the freedoms each of us cherish.

On Thursday, after paying my respects to the veterans at Arlington Cemetery, I met with two groups of patriots who span the generations: some of the remaining veterans of World War I and active duty personnel who served with such distinction in Somalia. These brave Americans are linked across the years to each other and to history by the valor with which they served our Nation. None of them shrunk from danger or challenge. In troubled times, they reached beyond our borders to protect our interests.

And as the world undergoes the most profound changes in the last 50 years, today we can draw a very powerful lesson from their courage and their vision. Just as we never protected our country by shrinking from a military threat, we cannot protect our prosperity by shrinking from our economic challenges.

Since I became President, our administration has been dedicated to restoring the American economy, to making work pay for all Americans again, to creating the conditions that will allow our private sector to create more jobs and higher incomes and more opportunity for everyone.

This economic program is beginning to work. We've lowered the deficit, kept inflation down, pushed interest rates down to record lows. Millions of Americans have refinanced their homes and businesses. And even though we still don't have as many jobs as we'd like, the private sector has produced more jobs in the last 10 months than in the previous 4 years.

Ultimately, however, the only way a wealthy nation can grow and create jobs and lift incomes

is to lower trade barriers and expand trade in a growing global economy. There simply is no other way that any rich country in the world can create jobs and raise incomes than to find other customers for their goods and services. America is no exception. We have a chance to do this in a few days when Congress considers the trade agreement called NAFTA.

The North American Free Trade Agreement will lower Mexico's barriers to American exports. When these barriers come down, we'll sell another 55,000 more American-made cars in Mexico next year alone. We'll sell hundreds of thousands more computers and create 200,000 new high-paying jobs in the next 2 years. NAFTA is a real good deal for America. And if we don't open up Mexico for our products, you can be sure that the Europeans and the Japanese will open up Mexico for theirs.

You see, if NAFTA passes, we'll have a competitive advantage over the Japanese and the Europeans in the Mexican market. If it fails, and Japan or Europe takes up the challenge that we walked away from, then they'll have an advantage over us.

Why then do some of our fellow citizens fear NAFTA so much? Because in the last 20 years their world has changed a lot and often not for the better. Technology can now go anywhere in the world. Money and information travel the globe in a millisecond. Skills we once had alone, others now share.

This new global economy has created an awful lot of opportunity, but it's also created a lot of hardship. We have to do many things to adjust. We're working now to devise a completely new system to replace our outdated unemployment system called reemployment. So that any-

one who loses a job, for whatever reason, will immediately receive the education and training and job placement help they need. We passed the family leave law so that you can't lose your job when you take some time off for a newborn baby or a sick parent; so that people can be good workers and good family members at the same time. We've got to have health care reform, and we've presented a plan that will provide, for the first time in our history, health care security to all Americans, even if they lose their jobs. And we're determined to fight crime with more police on the beat, more boot camps for youthful offenders, more jail cells for people who need that, too. That's what the crime bill, now moving through the Congress, will do.

So in education, in health care, in family leave, in crime, we're working hard to give the American people the security all of us need to face the changes we confront. But we cannot make the world the way it was. We simply cannot protect our workers, their jobs, and their incomes from the winds of global competition by trying to build walls. The only way to provide economic security and expanded opportunity for the middle class in this country is to take this new world head on, to compete and to win. And we can win. The American worker is now the most productive worker in the world again. We can out-compete and out-perform anyone anywhere. We will be number one again for a long time if we reach out to the world to compete. That's why American workers have nothing to fear from NAFTA and why American workers should be very concerned if we vote NAFTA down, walk away from Mexico and the rest of Latin America and the opportunities they present.

The day after Congress votes on NAFTA, I'm going to Seattle to meet with the leaders from Asian countries, including China and Japan, to ask them to open up their markets to our products, too. By the end of this year I'm going to try very hard to conclude an even bigger worldwide trade agreement that will bring down trade barriers to our products in Europe and the world over. Together with other nations, we can literally reignite growth in the world's

economy and create millions of new jobs and export opportunities for all Americans. But we must begin this week by passing NAFTA. NAFTA is not only a trade agreement with Mexico, it has become a symbol of our commitment to growth and to trade throughout the world. And believe me, whichever way the Congress votes, it will send a signal to every nation in the world about our intentions. Are we going to maintain our lead in the global economy and push others to open their markets to our products and services and to everyone else's, or are we going to retreat into a shell of protectionism?

If we pass NAFTA, it can put us at the center of the largest trading bloc in the world with Canada and Mexico, one that will quickly grow larger as we bring in the rest of Latin America. If we don't, we'll be stuck while someone else takes advantage of the opportunity. You know, this vote will tell us a lot about who we are as Americans in 1993. Great nations are defined not by how they act when the rules are clear and the future is set and the times are easy but by the choices they make during periods of great change when the future is not clear, the times are tough, and people have to forge their own future.

This is a defining moment for America. Will we seize the moment? Will we vote for hope over fear? The history of America's greatness says we will, for we've always triumphed when our Nation has engaged the world and great challenges it offers. By passing NAFTA, Congress can demonstrate that we intend to compete and win in a thriving global economy. We took the lead in creating it, now we have to make it again for the 21st century. We can build a future we'll be proud to leave our children, and the future begins on Wednesday with a positive vote for the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:40 p.m. on November 12 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 13.